DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 536 CS 009 308

AUTHOR	Kersting, Frank; Ferguson, Janice
TITLE	Narration in Reading Remediation.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	21p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Content Area Reading; *Language Experience Approach; Language Skills; *Narration; Primary Education; *Reading Improvement; Reading Research; Reading Skills; *Remedial Reading; *Story Grammar; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS	*Story Frames; Whole Language Approach

ABSTRACT

A case study examined the whole-part application of the language experience approach to reading as used for students whose reading development is severely delayed. The subject, a third-grade female student reading on the first-grade level as determined by the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (Woodcock, 1987), participated in a reading remediation program. The method used was the narrative technique and other remediation procedures such as word attack and sight word practice, and oral and silent reading in the SRA series. At the end of 6 months of instruction, the subject's reading level had improved to the grade level of 2.6. These results suggest that the language experience approach could prove to be a viable technique in reading instruction for prereaders, readers, and illiterate adults. The literature on narration provides a systematic format for developing stories that resemble reading texts. The stories can be used to teach story frame and improve semantic, syntactic, and comprehension skills. Applied seatwork can be assigned which strengthens the individual's skills in those areas. As an individual develops more competency in narration, reading ability in inferencing and structure should improve. (Twenty-one references are attached and one figure is included.) (RAE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED299536

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dr. Janice Ferguson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Narration in Reading Remediation

Authors:
Dr. Frank Kersting

Dr. Janice Ferguson

Western Kentucky University
College of Education

running head: Narration

CS 009308

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

The language experience approach can be refined using a narrative perspective. Research in narration provides a framework to assess and teach components that comprise a story frame. The story frame is the organization a child needs to relate stories in a coherent manner. The child's narration can be analyzed for semantic and syntactic complexity, and similarity to reading text. The results of a case study show how the use of narrative can be a productive remediation procedure in reading.

Introduction

The Language Experience Approach to Reading utilized by reading teachers for students whose reading development is severely delayed (Gillet,1986), is also recommended for use at the prereading level, early reading stages, and with illiterate adults (Braun, 1977). Seim (1977) suggests using this approach to teach content area material such as social studies, mathematics, and science. The purpose of this article is to refine the language experience approach material with the new area of inquiry, narration, to enhance the methodology reading teachers use. This article will discuss the narrative model and its components, describe teaching techniques applying the model, and present a case study demonstrating the efficacy of the model.

Language Experience Approach

The basis for the language experience approach described by Allen and Havorsen (1961) is a total initial reading program:

> What I can think about, I can talk about.
> What I can say, I can write.
> What I can write, I can read. p.33

There are two primary applications of this aproach, whole-part where an entire story is related and the parts taught later, or part-whole (Ashton-Warner, 1964) where individual components such as whole word recognition are taught before a story is generated. The approach used in this study is the whole-part approach

(Bush and Huebner (1979), Dallman (1982). Shewell, Payne, and Polloway (1985) recommend the Language Experience Approach for any age student whether for initial reading instruction or remediation application. Bush and Huebner (1979), Zintz (1972) and Ashton-Warner (1964) all acknowledge the success of this approach when used with students. The Language Experience Approach is used as the bridge between narration which is an oral language technique and reading because this approach begins reading instruction from the child's perspective.

Narration

Narration is defined as one means of representing past experiences by a sequence of ordered sentences that represent the temporal sequences of those events by that order (Garnett, 1986). A narrative refers to storytelling, retelling of story sequences, or relating personal experiences. Narration is important because it bridges the gap between oral language and reading (Garnett, 1986).

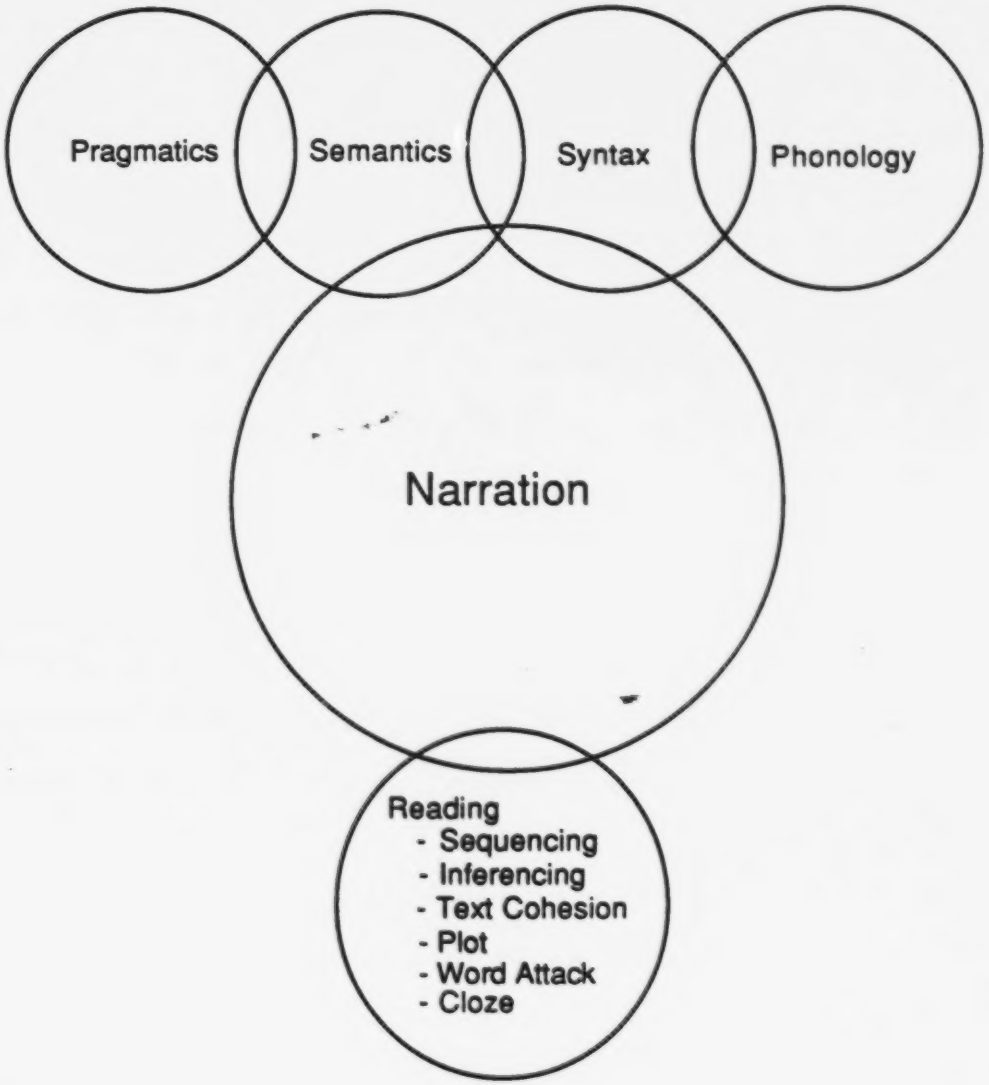
Oral Language Model. Narration can be thought of as the hub for both language skills and reading skills (Figure 1). The basis for language and reading skills is adequate cognitive development defined within established developmental ranges. The oral language dimensions of pragmatics, semantics, syntax, and phonology need to be measured on a developmental level.

Language pragmatics concerns the communication intent of the speaker as demonstrated by the speaker using various forms of communication, taking the perspective of the listener, and maintaining the topic. Semantics concerns the use of the words of the language to describe people, places, events, actions, feelings, and attributes. Syntax concerns the appropriate use of simple sentence constructions of statments, questions, negation, and commands, as well as constructions for complex and compound sentences. Phonology concerns the production of speech sounds.

Good oral language facility is a prerequisite skill before reading instruction can be successfully initiated (Zintz 1981). The reading skills of main idea, sequencing, inferencing, text cohesion, plot, word attack, and cloze can be taught through narration. As in the language experience approach, the subskills of reading are taught through the individual's own experiences and oral language abilities.

Although narration, described in Figure 1, is the basis for both oral language and reading, narration and conversation are not synonymous terms. Narration is not the same as conversation. In conversation, a dialogue is established between a speaker and a listener. In conversation there is turn taking while narration is essentially a monologue. The primary differences are: (Roth & Spekman, 1986)

Narration as a Basis for Language and Reading Skills (Fig.1)



Narration involves an extended elaboration of events
Narratives include introductory and concluding summary statements with an orderly presentation of events in between,
Narratives imply the speaker is active and the listener is passive.
Navrative carry the expectation that the speaker maintain an oral monologue.

While children may or may not have difficulty with both forms of oral language, this article's focus is on narration. For example, it is possible for a child to have conversation skills within the normal developmental range, but not have good narrative skills. This child, in all probability, is a poor reader.

Narration Models. The use of narrative contributes to people's understanding of how the world functions. It facilitates the predictions of actions and consequences, causes and effects. Use of narrative skills is based on two models which emphasize different components of story generation and recall. The first model is the Inferenced Based Model (Graesser, Robertson, and Clark, 1983), which refers to the information required for comprehension which may or may not be explicitly stated in the story text. In this model, an individual call on knowledge of typical sequences of actions and events, roles, causal relationships, and problem solving strategies. The second model is the Structure Based Model (Rumelhart, 1977), which refers to the actual story structure. In this model, an individual uses knowledge of proposition analysis where the story is described as a series of superordinate and subordinate propositions; text cohesion which refers to the manner in

which different parts of the story's text are tied to preceding or subsequent parts; and story grammar. These models reflect the different skills needed to tell and understand narrated events.

In the Structure Based Model, the key item is the story grammar. Story grammar is the glue of narrated events. Page and Stewart (1985) compared five authors' story telling components to arrive at a concensus of essential components. These features include:

Setting- introduces main character(s),
Plot- sets up the predicament that the main character attempts to resolve to achieve the goal The problem may incorporate only the main plot or main plot plus sub-plots.
Response-includes the main character's internal response and the attempt to achieve the goal.
Outcome- describes what happens as a result of the main character's actions and includes any evaluative response made by the main character.

In addition to those elements, other elements could inclde intiating events which are occurrences that induce the protagonist to act, internal responses which describe internal reactions to the precipitating events, and reactions which describe the protagonist's emotional response regarding the outcome Stein & Glenn (1979). The story grammar represents the speaker's knowledge of narrative structure which is used to process narrative material and to generate stories (Roth, 1986)

Story Frame

Story grammar can be taught using a story frame which provides a sketch or overview of the narrative. This allows an individual to follow the 'frame' when developing a story

(Garnett, 1986). The story frame can be used to generate comprehension questions; the individual can either write the questions or respond to those generated by the teacher. The story frame consists of:

-setting: Who? What? When?
-event: What happened to the main character?
-goal: What are the main characters trying to do?
-attempts: What happens when they try to do it?
-reactions: What are the feelings?,
What are the plans?
-end: How does it turn out?

Story grammar and the story frame can be taught through structured and unstructured story production, story retelling, scrambled stories, and macrocloze. In a structured story, a person can retell a familiar story such as a fairy tale. An unstructured story topic can be events, domestic scenes, or fantasy adventure tales. Domestic scenes can include events as baking a cake, such as describing the purchase of the items, items needed for mixing the batter, and the steps leading to putting the icing on the cake. Retelling can be either through repeating stories told by the teacher or other students, or by using sequenced picture cards, arranging them and then telling the story. In scrambled stories, the individual arranges a prewritten story that has been written on cards into their correct sequence and then retold. In macrocloze the individual contributes missing elements of the story which must match the previous content of the story (Page & Stewart, 1985).

In this method, children first listen to or read stories in which story elements are systematically deleted and then they

are instructed to retell the stories and fill in the missing parts.

Developmental Perspective

Narration skills change as a function of cognitive and language development. A child in school may demonstrate narrative skills at these developmental levels. In addition to the narrative skills, a child may have difficulty with cohesion which is a set of structures, both semantic and syntactic, that directly links sentences to each other (Irwin, 1986). An example of cohesion is the anaphoric use of pronouns. While cohesion deals with the internal structure of a story, the narration frame establishes the larger more abstract superstructure. There are milestones in a child's development of narrative skills.

Between the ages two to four, children demonstrate conversational heaps and leaps. A heap chunks item upon item in an unordered way. An example of heaping is:

> "The horse is eating grass. It's raining and the cat is running away. I can climb the tree and get an apple.

A leap moves from event to event. In leaping, the child relates what is seen with little regard for listener knowledge or theme. An example of leaping is:

> "Tammy fell off my bed. And she bumped her head. Mommy gave me a spanking and she didn't go."

Notice in both examples, the sytactic constructions are combinations of simple and compound sentences, the semantic use of nouns and verbs are appropriate; and there is

pragmatic communication intent of informativeness. What these stories are lacking is a story frame.

From ages three to five, there is event chaining but no central focus. An example is:

> "We went to the orchard and we picked apples and we had some apple cider. We bought some pumpkins and we ate some candied apples."

Again, there is good oral language use. The story is 'held together' through the use of "and." From ages five to six, there is logical chaining linked to a character or theme. An example taken from a play setting using G.I. Joe characters is:

> "Let's play soldiers. One man is shot. He needs help and his friend helps him hide. The other soldiers can't find him. He needs help. Let's get the helicopter from over there."

From the age of six onward stories are episodic, including events, reactions, goals, attempts, consequences, and resolutions. There is the use of additives (and), temporality (then), and causation (because, since). An example of a seven year old's narration of adventure is as follows:

> Hey, let's pretend that you are Skeletor and I am He-Man. Let's pretend that my ship has crashed and you are chasing me. I'll get my sword and turn into Master of the Universe and then we'll fight. I'll try to get back to Castle Grey Skull but you try to stop me."

In looking at the oral language there are syntactic constructions of simple, and compound sentences; the semantic notions of time, action, pronominalization, and description

are present. Using the story frame format, there is a setting, an event, and a goal. This narration, through prompting, could be 'fleshed out' to include reactions and an end. In conclusion, these narrative skills are needed when a child reads and they represent foundation skills for reading comprehension.

Teaching Story Grammar

Teaching story grammar in reading therapy can be done in small groups or individually. Use of a microcomputer word processor plus printer gives the teacher added flexibility. The story grammar can be taught using story production of structured stories or unstructured stories, story retelling, scambled stories, or macrocloze. In story retelling, the teacher would tell the story first. As the individual or group retells the story, the teacher writes the story on the board or enters it into the microcomputer.

In story production, structured stories which were previously introducted and known by the child, such as fairy tales, can be told. A resource for these stories is Storytelling (Marzollo & Savage, 1981) where familiar stories are outlined in an eight to twelve frame story board. The story is told using the story board to build the story frame of setting, event, goal, attempts, reactions, and end. In unstructured stories, events from real life or fantasy adventures are used with the teacher drawing pictures as the story is developed. The sheet of paper is divided into

panels and the teacher makes line drawings of the central events. The pictures can then be used for retelling, printing the story line, and expansion. Macrocloze is used for participatory storytelling where members or teacher/individual contribute to the story development. Scrambled stories can consist of previously told stories that are now segmented for orderly arrangement or new stories where the sequence must be ordered.

The stories can be used for related seatwork which should be functional, transferring a skill or strategy to "real reading." (Sundbye, 1987). If the story is written on the blackboard, recopying the story practices penmanship and can be used for seatwork. If the story is entered into the word processor, copies can be made. Seatwork activies encompass semantic and syntactic and comprehension tasks.

Comprehension tasks include answering non-inferential questions of the 'Four W's,' who, what, where, when. Inferential questions would be why, motives, and possible outcomes. The questions can either be composed by the teacher or generated by the students. Student generation provides practice in formulating questions from known text so that question construction and story frame analysis can be learned from a writing perspective.

Semantic tasks include activites as underlining parts of speech, as marking all nouns; using particular parts of speech as adjectives, time, adverbs; writing new sentences with key words, particularly words with multiple definitions

as fall or run; and writing definitions.

Syntactic tasks (Wiig & Semel, 19) include:

paraphrasing- rewriting sentences
sentence combining- taking simple sentences and combining into compound and complex setences
sentence recombining-simplifying compound and complex sentences
sentence completion-completing a sentence when minimal words are provided
sentence cloze-completing the sentence when words are omitted
conjunctions-using conjunctions to mark outcome, time, or condition
outcome: because, so, as, in order that
time: before, after, as soon as,
condition: if, unless, although

Case Study

The narrative format is used as part of a comprehensive reading remediation program for a third grade female student reading on the first grade level as determined by the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests-Revised (Woodcock, 1987) where her Total Reading Cluster Score Grade Equivalence was 1.5 with the subscores for Readiness Cluster at grade equivalent 1.6, Basic Skill Cluster at grade equivalent 1.5, and Reading Comprehension Cluster at grade equivalent 1.6. Her scores were even across Clusters with her reading level significantly below grade placement level. At the end of 6 months of instruction, her reading level had improved to the grade level of 2.6. Her narratives were more complex as measured by plot, story completenes, and linguistic complexity.

Besides the narrative technique other remediation procedures include word attack and sight word practice, oral

and silent reading in the SRA series. The narrative is used to improve her ability to: relate stories using the story frame, to identify story sequence, comprehension and main idea, and to refine semantic and syntactic skills. An example of narrative practice from an therapy session follows this format:

1. Jointly select story theme.
2. Teacher writes the story as related by child using either a microcomputer or pen/paper.
3. Teacher and child read story together.
4. Revise story using semantic, syntactic, and comprehension format. For example, in semantic analysis, adjectives and/or adverbs could be added, pronoun cohesion could be checked, and new vocabulary words could be added. In syntactic analysis, sentences can be combined and specific constructions could be taught. In comprehensionteaching, teacher or student can generate low-order or high order questions. The comprehension questions can be rewritten to reflect more or less story clues.

This teaching format was used with the following results.

Story: "I rode bikes with my mom. I went to my friend's house. I rode with my friend. I played in the house. I went home. I played with my dog and cats."

Revised story: On Saturday, Mom and I went for a bike ride to visit a good friend. Everyone rode bikes for about one hour. We rode around the block. After riding bikes, we went inside my friend's house to play with her neat toys. Before it started to get dark, mom and I went home. Before we ate dinner, I played with my friendly cat and dog.

The comprehension questions the student wrote were:
Who rode bikes?
Where did they go?
Additional questions were generated together and included:
When did they go?
What did they do?
What was the setting?
What was the event?
What did we do?

What was the end?

This child could write non-inferential questions which were stylized by the same syntactic constructions. These questions can be paraphrased to reflect different patterns and more story clues. The questions from the story frame were not appropriate and more time must be spent with concepts and questions regarding story frame.

In analyzing the recast story, it was much more complex in syntactic and semantic usage. The syntactic constructions contained simple, and compound, and complex sentence constructions. Semantic forms included pronouns, adjectives and time words.

Since reading improvement is a primary goal, her narration can be compared to a 3rd grade reading passage. The parameters of semantcs and syntax are analzed. The narration iscontrasted with a paragraph from a third grade reading text, Journeys, by Houghton Mifflin.

On Sunday morning, even though his ladder wasn't finished Warton decided to test it. He fastened one end to the owl's saggy sofa. The other end he dropped out of the doorway. Lying on his belly, he placed one foot over the edge and into the first loop. That one held.... But Warton had to be sure that his ladder would really work.
p. 126

The syntactic and semantic analysis indicate the following parallels:

SEMANTICS

Child's Story

no contractions

adjectives: good, neat, friendly
pronouns: I, everyone, we, my, her, it

possessive: friend's
connectives: and, after, before

Reading passage
contractions: wasn't
adjectives: Sunday, saggy, first
pronouns: his, it, he
possessive: owl's
connectives:

SYNTAX

Child's Story
Simple Sentence
We rode around the block

Complex Sentence
On Saturday, Mom and I went for a bike ride to visit a good friend
After riding bikes we went inside my friend's house to play with her neat toys.

Compound Sentences
Before it started to get dark, Mom and I went home.
Before we ate dinner, I played with my friendly cat and dog.

Reading Passage
Simple Sentences
He fastened one end to the owl's saggy sofa.
The other end he dropped out of the doorway.
That one held.

Complex Sentences
On Sunday morning, even though his ladder wasn't finished, Warton decided to test it.
Lying on his belly, he placed one foot over the edge on into the first loop.

Compound Sentences
Warton had to be sure his ladder really worked
(implied compound using 'but').

Several items of interest are apparent. In semantic forms, the stories show some parallel word usage patterns. Syntactic forms, however, are different. The child's complex sentence constructions were primarily introductory dependent

phrases plus main clause, while the reading text was expressed in a sequential format to move the story events. The child's compound sentences were expressed in reverse order. The text's compound sentence was inferential.

The implications for this in future therapy sessions would be to teach constructions that parallel the text's constructions. While this story did not contain those constructions, no assumptions can be made about the student's knowledge and use of those constructions. In therapy, however, construction patterns should focus on connectors and inferencing.

Summary

The language experience approach has proven to be a viable technique in reading instruction for prereaders, readers, and illiterate adults. The literature on narration provides a systematic format for developing stories that resemble reading texts. The stories can be used to teach story frame and improve semantic, syntactic, and comprehension skills. Applied seatwork can be assigned which strengthens the individual's skills in those areas. As an individual develops more competency in narration, reading ability in inferencing and structure should inprove. Although this technique was used with a third grader, narration can be successfully used with any age individual.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, R.V. & Halvorsen, G.C. (1961). The language experience approach to reading instruction. Contributions in reading. Boston: Ginn & Co.

Ashton-Warner, S. (1964). Teacher. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Braun, C. (1977). Experience: The basis for communication skill development. In C. Braun & V. Froese (Eds.), An Experience-based approach to language and reading (pp.3-18). Baltimore: University Park Press.

Dallmann, M., Rouch, R. L., Char, L., & Deboer, J. (1982). The teaching of reading (6th ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Erikson, R.E. (1986). Warton's dilemma. A Toad for Tuesday. W.K. Durr (Senior Author), Journey's (pp.112-135). Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Garnett, K. (1986). Telling tales: Narratives and learing disabled children. Topics in Language Disorders 5, 82-98.

Gillett, J.W. & Temple, C. (1986). Understanding reading problems: Assessment and instruction (2nd ed). Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Graesser, A.C., Robertson, S.P. & Clark, L.F. (1983) Question answering: A method for exploring the on-line construction of prose representations. In J.Fine and R.O. Freedle (Eds.), Advances in Discourse Processes: Vol. 10 Developmental Issues in Discourse pp. 41-68. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Hall, H.A., Ribovich, J.K., and Ramig, C.J. (1979). Reading and the elementary school child (2nd ed). New York: D. Van Nostrand.

Lintz, M.V. (1981). Corrective reading (4th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Co.

Marzello, J. & Savage, B. (1981). Storytelling. Belmont, California: Fearon-Pittman.

Page, J.L. & Stewart, S.R. (1985). Story grammar skills in school-aged children. Topics in Language Disorders 5 16-30.

Roth, F. & Spekman, N. (1986). Narrative discourse: spontaneously generated stories of learning disabled and normally achieving students. Journal of Speech and Hearing Disorders 51, 8-23.

Roth, F. (1986). Oral narrative abilities of learning disabled students. Topics in Language Disorders 7 (1), 21-30.

Rumelhart, D.E. (1977). Toward an interactive model of reading. In S. Dornie (ed.), Attention and performance VI Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum Associates.

Schewel, R., Payne, R.A. & Polloway, E. (1985). Reading. Strategies for teaching retarded and special needs learners (3rd ed). Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.

Seim, D. (1977) Incorporating language experiences into the content areas. In C. Braun & V. Froese (Eds.) An experienced-based approach to language and reading (pp. 3-18). Baltimore: University Park Press.

Stein, N. & Glenn, C. (1979). An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In R.O. Freedle (Ed.), New Directions in Discourse Processing (vol. 2). Norwood, N.J.: Ablex.

Sundbye, N. (1987). Text explicitness and inferential questioning: Effects on story understanding and recall. Reading Research Quarterly 22, 82-98.

Wiig, E. & Semel, E. (1976). Language disabilities in children and adolescents. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co.

Woodcock, R.W. (1987). Woodcock reading mastery tests. Circle Pines, Minn: American Guidance Service Inc.

Zintz, M.V. (1972). The reading process. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown.